

RETAIL PRICES - JUNE QUARTER, 1953.

14 AUG 1953

All Items - "C" Series.

"C" Series index numbers of retail prices of all items for the June quarter of 1953 (with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1,000) were as shown below.

"C" Series Retail Price Index Numbers and Percentage Increases, June Quarter, 1953.

City.	Index Number.	Increase from Year Ended June, 1939.	Increase from June Quarter, 1952.	Increase from March Quarter, 1953.
Brisbane ..	2,115	145.1	2.5	0.5
Toowoomba ..	2,149	152.5	2.7	1.1
Rockhampton	2,146	149.2	2.7	0.3
Townsville ..	2,228	144.3	4.0	0.6
Bundaberg ..	2,109	150.8	2.8	0.2
Warwick ..	2,130	159.1	3.3	0.8

The "C" Series retail price index number for Queensland (weighted average of "five towns") recorded the smallest rise for any June quarter since 1947. It increased from 2,116 to 2,127, a rise of 0.5 per cent. All six cities for which the index is available recorded small increases, the least being 0.2 per cent. in Bundaberg and the greatest 1.1 per cent. in Toowoomba. In Brisbane, an increase of 0.5 per cent. followed an increase of 0.8 per cent. in the March quarter, and in all except the two Downs cities the rise in the recent quarter was less than in the March quarter.

There was no definite pattern in the constituent parts of the total increases which occurred in the various cities but an increase in food prices was the most general element. Food and grocery prices rose in all six cities by amounts ranging from 0.5 per cent. in Brisbane to 1.3 per cent. in Toowoomba. Clothing and footwear prices increased by nearly 1½ per cent. in Toowoomba and Townsville and by under 1 per cent. in the other cities except Rockhampton where they recorded a decrease of 0.4 per cent. Miscellaneous items were very little changed except for an increase of 1.6 per cent. in Warwick. House rents moved significantly only in Toowoomba and Rockhampton with increases of 1.4 and 0.8 per cent. respectively.

The latest increase made the rise in the index for Brisbane 2.5 per cent. for the twelve months ended June, 1953. This was the smallest rise over a period of twelve months since the year ended September, 1946, when it was 2.1 per cent. and prices were just commencing to rise in the post-war period of inflation which reached its peak in the year ended December, 1951, with a rise of 25.1 per cent.

Percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39 in food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and miscellaneous items are shown in the following table.

Retail Prices. Percentage Increases^a, June Quarter, 1953.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1953.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1953.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1953.
Brisbane ..	177.1	0.5	274.4	0.7	100.6	0.3
Toowoomba ..	198.0	1.3	277.9	1.4	99.7	0.1
Rockhampton	173.0	1.0	266.9	-0.4	108.0	0.1
Townsville	168.9	0.6	272.6	1.3	108.5	-0.2
Bundaberg ..	170.9	0.7	275.9	0.2	98.4	-0.4
Warwick ..	188.9	0.9	277.3	0.4	104.9	1.6

^a Minus (-) indicates decrease.

Food and Groceries.

During the recent quarter, the food and groceries index numbers increased for the six Queensland cities for which data are collected. The principal variations recorded were increases in the prices of milk, bacon, onions, eggs, tea, and potatoes, and decreased prices for meat. The relatively larger increases in Toowoomba and Rockhampton were due chiefly to larger increases in the prices of potatoes and onions in those cities.

Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

The rent index remained stationary during the quarter in Townsville, Bundaberg, and Warwick, but increased in Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Toowoomba by 0.2 per cent., 0.8 per cent., and 1.4 per cent. respectively.

Clothing and Footwear.

The clothing and footwear index decreased slightly in Rockhampton but increased in the other five cities covered by the survey. Increases were recorded in the prices of winter clothing and decreases in the prices of men's suits and shirts. The chief causes of the decrease in Rockhampton were decreases in some items of men's clothing accompanied by only small increases in the prices of women's clothing in that city.

Miscellaneous Items.

The miscellaneous items index for Brisbane increased during June quarter by the same percentage as was recorded in March quarter (0.3 per cent.). The chief cause of the relatively larger increase in Warwick (1.6 per cent.) was an increase in charges for gas in that city, while the decreases in Bundaberg and Townsville were due chiefly to lower electricity charges and household drapery prices respectively.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in June quarter, 1953, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	3 ³ ₄	1	0	5 ¹ ₂	19	10 ³ ₄		1	0	2 ¹ ₄	1	0	7
Rockhampton ..	1	0	3 ¹ ₂	1	0	7 ¹ ₄	18	11 ¹ ₂		19	11 ³ ₄	1	1	1	
Townsville ..	1	1	0 ³ ₄	1	1	7 ³ ₄	1	0	6	1	0	2	1	1	9 ¹ ₂
Bundaberg ..	19	11 ¹ ₄		1	0	7 ¹ ₂	15	3		1	0	5 ³ ₄	1	0	7 ¹ ₄
Warwick ..	1	0	1 ³ ₄	1	0	7 ¹ ₄	16	6		1	0	0 ³ ₄	1	1	6 ¹ ₄

In relation to Brisbane, the prices of all items together increased in three and decreased in two of the five provincial cities for which the index numbers are calculated. The largest variation in these relative prices occurred in Toowoomba, where the amount required to purchase goods costing £1 in Brisbane increased from £1 0s. 2¹₂d. during March quarter to £1 0s. 3³₄d. during June quarter. Small increases occurred in Townsville and Warwick (¹₄d. and ³₄d. in the £ respectively) while decreases of ¹₂d. and ³₄d. in the £ occurred in Rockhampton and Bundaberg respectively.

The relative prices of food and groceries increased in the five provincial cities for which data are collected by amounts ranging from ¹₄d. in the £ in Townsville to 2d. in the £ in Toowoomba. The prices of these items are higher in each of these cities than in Brisbane, the largest excess being 1s. 7³₄d. in the £ in Townsville and the smallest 5¹₂d. in the £ in Toowoomba. Compared with 1939, food prices have moved closer to the metropolitan level in all five provincial cities. Before the war both Toowoomba and Warwick had cheaper food than Brisbane, but now in these places as in the other three cities food is dearer than in Brisbane.

Clothing and footwear prices were higher than in Brisbane in four of the five provincial cities covered by the survey. In the other city (Rockhampton) the amount required to purchase clothing and footwear items costing £1 in Brisbane decreased from £1 0s. 2½d. during March quarter to 19s. 11¾d. during June quarter. In Toowoomba and Townsville these amounts increased by 1¼d. and 1½d. respectively, while they decreased in Bundaberg and Warwick by 1½d. and ¾d. respectively. This section, which shows less variation throughout the State than any other, is the only section in which Townsville prices are usually exceeded by those in some of the other five cities.

Miscellaneous items show the greatest range of variation between the cities, prices closest to the metropolitan being in Toowoomba, where the excess over Brisbane prices decreased during the quarter from 7½d. in the £ to 7d. in the £. Of the cities for which the index numbers are calculated, Townsville has the highest prices for miscellaneous items. In that city the excess over Brisbane prices decreased from 1s. 10¾d. to 1s. 9½d. The largest change in the relativity in the latest quarter was a rise of 3½d. in the Warwick excess over Brisbane.

Commonwealth and State Basic Wage Rates.

Following the publication of the index numbers for the June quarter, 1953, the basic wage rates of the Commonwealth Court were automatically adjusted. The index numbers, the new wage rates, and the amounts of the adjustments are shown in the next table. The latest basic wage rates for males and females declared by the various State industrial authorities, and the dates from which they operated, are also shown. The rates prescribed by the State Court in Brisbane were increased by 1s. Od. both for adult males and for adult females. Commonwealth rates operated from the beginning of the first full pay period in August.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates.

Australian Capital Cities.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series), 2nd Quarter, 1953.	Commonwealth Basic Wage.		State Basic Wage.					
		Males. ^a	Increase on Previous Rate.	Males.			Females.		
Brisbane	2,115	£ 10 18 0	1 0	£ 10 19 0			£ 7 7 0		3.8.53
Sydney	2,360	12 3 0	2 0	12 3 0			9 2 0		1.8.53
Melbourne	2,279	11 15 0	3 0	(11 15 0)			a		1.8.53 ^b
Adelaide	2,238	11 11 0	3 0	11 11 0			8 13 0		1.8.53
Perth	2,290	11 16 0	5 0	12 6 6			8 0 3		28.7.53
Hobart	2,351	12 2 0	3 0	(12 2 0)			a		1.8.53 ^b

^a The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.

^b No State wage declared. The rate shown is that of the Commonwealth Court which is followed to a large extent.

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BRISBANE.

11th August, 1953.

Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

Table No. 2 - Food and Groceries Retail Prices Index.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended June, 1953.	Quarter Ended -					
				June, 1952.	Sept., 1952.	Dec., 1952.	March, 1953.	June, 1953.	
Brisbane	856	971	2,355	2,334	2,367	2,321	2,361	2,372
Toowoomba	814	1,010	2,396	2,434	2,401	2,361	2,396	2,426
Rockhampton	895	1,012	2,414	2,416	2,409	2,383	2,419	2,443
Townsville	955	1,057	2,540	2,472	2,531	2,506	2,553	2,568
Bundaberg	903	1,027	2,414	2,403	2,398	2,382	2,430	2,446
Weighted Average									
Five Towns	864	984	2,376	2,357	2,384	2,342	2,382	2,396
Warwick	846	1,000	2,418	2,385	2,412	2,394	2,423	2,444

Table No. 3 - Clothing and Footwear Retail Prices Index.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended June, 1953.	Quarter Ended -				
				June, 1952.	Sept., 1952.	Dec., 1952.	March, 1953.	June, 1953.
Brisbane	829	1,454	3,081	3,002	3,049	3,088	3,083	3,104
Toowoomba	829	1,429	3,083	2,965	3,020	3,086	3,091	3,133
Rockhampton	845	1,477	3,103	3,027	3,070	3,128	3,114	3,100
Townsville	840	1,457	3,091	3,029	3,045	3,097	3,090	3,130
Bundaberg	839	1,447	3,139	3,027	3,102	3,152	3,149	3,154
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	831	1,454	3,085	3,004	3,050	3,093	3,088	3,109
Warwick	825	1,441	3,089	3,014	3,044	3,096	3,101	3,113